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ABSTRACT

The report reviews the accomplishments of the Indiana College Placement and Assessment Center during its second year (1988-89) of statewide service. The report reviews the background of the Center since its inception in 1986 at which time it was charged with the responsibility of developing a data base involving, and the capacity for communicating individually with, 4,000 ninth grade students and their families. The Center's communications with participating ninth graders, which included a student/parent survey of preparedness for higher education, a toll-free telephone hotline, counseling activities, and a computer network are described. A table showing the Center's budget for 1988-89, and a calendar of its major activities during this time are also provided. Finally, its plans and prospects for the future are discussed with specific attention to what the Center expects to accomplish with expanded funding in 1989-91 and how the next round of bidding to provide the Center's services will proceed. (GLR)

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INDIANA COLLEGE PLACEMENT AND ASSESSMENT CENTER

(Discussion Item)

June 9, 1989

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Commission for Higher Education
101 West Ohio Street, Suite 550
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
(317) 232-1900

HE023631

COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
Friday, June 9, 1989

DISCUSSION ITEM B: Indiana College Placement and Assessment Center

Staff Recommendation — For information only.

Background — In October, 1986, the Commission contracted with Indiana University for the first year's operation of an Indiana College Placement and Assessment Center. During that year, the Center's chief responsibilities were to develop a data base involving, and the capacity for communicating individually with, 4,000 ninth grade students and their families.

In June, 1987, the Commission extended the Assessment Center's contract for a second year. During that time, the Center extended its program of services to ninth grade students and their families throughout the state.

In June, 1988, the Commission adopted a second extension of the Assessment Center's contract. In October of that year, the Commission adopted a longer-range (two-year) extension in order to align the contract with the biennial budget calendar. At the same time, the Commission adopted a timetable for open bidding on the contract, to occur in 1990.

Today's report addresses the Assessment Center's accomplishments during the second year (1988-89) of statewide service. It also looks forward to the expansion of service beyond the ninth grade level that has been made possible by action of the 1989 General Assembly.

Supporting Document — *"Annual Report for the Indiana College Placement and Assessment Center, 1988-89,"* dated May 25, 1989

COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Annual Report for the Indiana College Placement and Assessment Center, 1988-89

May 25, 1989

1. Background

In October, 1986, the Commission for Higher Education contracted with Indiana University for the first year's operation of an Indiana College Placement and Assessment Center. During that year, the Center's chief responsibilities were to develop a data base involving, and the capacity for communicating individually with, 4,000 ninth grade students and their families.

The 1987 General Assembly appropriated additional funds for the Assessment Center, enabling it to extend its program of services to ninth grade students and their families throughout the state. In June, 1987, the Commission extended the Assessment Center's contract for a second year. In June, 1988, the Commission adopted a second extension of the Center's contract. In October, 1988, the Commission adopted a longer-range (two year) extension in order to align the contract with the biennial budget calendar. It also adopted a timetable for open bidding on the contract, to take place in 1990.

2. Budget

1988-89 was the second year in which the Assessment Center provided statewide service to ninth grade students and their families. Its income consisted of a state appropriation of $400,000. The Center's fiscal year budget for 1988-89 is summarized in Table 1 (next page).

In November, 1988, the Assessment Center received an award, renewable for five years, from the Indiana Secondary Market for Education Loans. The first year's award of $150,000 was devoted to expanding the Center's services through technology. It permitted an upgrading and expansion of Hotline telephone services and the implementation of an electronic network that will eventually link all of Indiana's postsecondary institutions with the Center and with one another. Income and expenses pertaining to the ISM award are not included in Table 1. For further information on the Hotline and the network, see section four.

In 1989 the Indiana General Assembly increased its appropriation for the Assessment Center by $350,000 in order to obtain an expansion of services beyond the ninth grade level, beginning with the 1989-91 biennium. Section six of this report describes plans for the use of those funds.

3. Calendar

Table 2 summarizes chronologically the Center's major activities in 1988-89. The summary differs in one important respect from what had been anticipated. In 1988, it was expected that data from the Department of Education's Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP) program would be provided to the Center in order to permit it to communicate with parents concerning their children's test

results and the implications of those results for postsecondary preparedness. That did not occur. In 1989 the General Assembly passed and the Governor signed HB 1902, which included language stating that the Department would make the necessary ISTEP data available to the Commission upon request.

Table 1

ASSESSMENT CENTER BUDGET FOR 1988-89

Expense Category			Institutional Contribution	State Appropriation
1.	Personnel:	Full-Time Staff		$121,250
		Graduate Assistants		28,616
		Production Workers		20,220
		Research Faculty		2,800
		Donated Faculty/Staff Services	32,276	
2.	Fringe Benefits		10,392	30,862
3.	Supplies:	Printing		73,660
		Postage		66,820
		Telephone		8,000
		General Office		10,259
		Insurance		200
4.	Computer Costs			26,600
5.	Travel			2,931
6.	Equipment			3,682
7.	Contract Services			4,100
8.	Indirect Cost		110,969	
	Totals		**$153,637**	**$400,000**

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4. Accomplishments

a. Participation

In 1988-89, the number of schools agreeing to participate in Assessment Center's program increased from 302 to 370. The number of ninth graders

Table 2

ASSESSMENT CENTER CALENDAR FOR 1988-89

July, 1988	Contact school corporations regarding 1988-89 participation Reprogram for new student record format Develop counselor data file
August	Ship name/address forms to participating schools Receive tape and hard copy from schools Revise, re-design, order printed materials
September	Submit budget request for 1989-91 Begin student/parent data file Mail information packets to counselors, other key contacts
October	Finish student/parent data entry Mail first student/parent communication Mail first newsletter [SCIPPE brochure shipped to high schools]
November	Conduct in-school publicity campaign Mail first student/parent survey Submit proposal to ISM; receive award
December	Begin entering student/parent responses to first survey Decide how to select target students for 1990 SCIPPE campaign
January	Mail ICPAC Planner to students/parents Mail second newsletter Finish data entry for first survey Begin expanded Hotline service
February	Develop priority/options list, related computing capacity, and printed materials for SCIPPE campaign
March	Distribute 1990 SCIPPE Campaign Organizer Distribute priority/options list, student names to institutions participating in SCIPPE campaign Mail third newsletter Begin mailings (March - June) for eleventh grade pilot project
April	Mail second student/parent survey Begin electronic network pilot project (PLAN) Distribute individual school reports
May	Mail fourth newsletter Enter student/parent responses to second survey Begin planning 1989-91 expansion
June	Review and assess 1988-89 program of services Begin 1988-89 annual report Order printed materials for 1989-90

who as a result entered in the Center's data file increased by 7,000 to 67,100 names. Twenty-one of the participating schools were private. The Center estimates that 89 percent of Indiana's ninth grade pupils from public schools and 27 percent of those from private schools received the ICPAC communications that are sent to all names in the student/parent data file. For ninth graders from both kinds of school, the combined 1988-89 participation rate was 85 percent.

The Center's communications with participating ninth graders included four newsletters, at least one survey, and the "ICPAC Postsecondary Planner," a compendium of information about such things as where Indiana's postsecondary institutions are located and how to write an application letter. In all, each household on the mailing list received at least six communications between October, 1988, and June, 1989. The Center also expanded its data file for mailings by adding the names of 1,400 counselors from participating schools. These counselors received advance mailings of everything that the Center sent to households.

b. Surveys

Some of the Center's communications are interactive. One example is the student/parent survey. Students and their parents are asked questions that pertain to preparedness for higher education; those who reply receive additional messages tailored to their responses. For households that give permission, information from the survey is shared with those college and university campuses that are participating in Indiana's campaign to improve participation in postsecondary education.

In 1988-89, nineteen thousand students filled out and returned the first student/parent survey. That was a response rate of 29 percent, five percent above the rate for 1987-88. More than 18,000 parents also responded to the survey. Ninety-four percent of those parents - five percent more than in 1987-88 - gave permission for the release of data for the purpose of providing their children with information, assistance, and encouragement regarding postsecondary education.

c. Hotline

Another example of interactive communications is the toll-free telephone Hotline. Students or their parents call with specific questions about degree programs, admissions requirements, or careers. Callers receive individual attention; a team of graduate assistants answers each question, routinely confirming each answer by mail.

In 1988-89, and especially in response to the ISM award, the Center began to publicize the Hotline's existence. Telephone lines were added, additional staff hired, and two workstations set up. From December through March, Hotline staffers received 500 calls a month, a rate of 6,000 calls per year. Specialized information pieces were developed to mail in response to the most commonly asked questions.

d. SCIPPE Campaign

The survey data and parental permissions received by the Assessment Center make it a valuable resource for the statewide campaign to improve preparedness for postsecondary education (SCIPPE). Part of the campaign involves the identification of ninth graders who might be considered at risk of not considering higher education a possibility.

For the 1989 campaign, the Center worked with its advisory committee to develop a set of alternatives for participating campuses. This priorities/options list let campuses select the group or number of at risk pupils they wanted to work with. Eleven priority/option groups were identified within each of the eight SCIPPE regions. In all, the priorities/options lists provided nearly 13,000 names and addresses for the SCIPPE campaign (because some options overlapped, the lists included an unknown number of duplications).

e. Counselors

The survey data also made the Center a valuable resource for Indiana school counselors. In 1988-89, counselors received advance mailings of all of the Center's communications to households. For the first time they also received individualized school reports that summarized the survey responses from each school's ninth grade class. Each school report also showed how the percentage of respondents for that school compared with the statewide percentage of 29 percent.

f. Network

Part of the Assessment Center's ISM award purchased a microcomputer and accessories to support an electronic network linking all postsecondary campuses with the Center and with one another. This network (the Postsecondary Learning and Assessment Network, or PLAN) is conceived to provide news of SCIPPE-related programs, the individualized school reports, special reports by the Assessment Center, an electronic message system, financial aid bulletins, skills assessment programs, an on-line question-asking capability, and a direct linkage with the telephone Hotline.

In April, 1989, a small-scale version of the network was begun. Initially the pilot project involved four campuses, with the expectation that by the end of 1989 all of Indiana's postsecondary campuses would be part of PLAN. In the more distant future schools, public libraries, and human service agencies might also be connected with PLAN.

5. Governance

The Assessment Center reports directly to the Commission for Higher Education and works closely with two statewide committees, the coalition called SCIPPE and the Center's own advisory committee. The latter, which includes representatives from several independent and all seven public institutions, is the forum through which postsecondary institutions bring their concerns and expertise to bear upon the Center's activities.

The Center has succeed in establishing an identity as a statewide service independent of Indiana University. It has its own mailing address and letterhead stationery. Through its Hotline, as it will eventually do through PLAN, it responds to requests concerning any and all careers and institutions. In addition to the information the Center provides about postsecondary education in general, it also provides information about specific institutions or campuses upon request.

6. Plans and Prospects for the Future

This section describes what the Assessment Center expects to accomplish with expanded funding in 1989-91 and how the next round of bidding to provide the Center's services will proceed.

a. 1989-91

By the end of the 1987-89 biennium, the primary tasks given to the Assessment Center in 1986 will have been completed. The development of services for ninth graders and their parents throughout the state will have been accomplished. Apart from the prospects for expansion resulting from ISM's commitment to long-term support of the Hotline and PLAN, the program of services for ninth grade students will continue in 1989-91 about as it was in 1988-89.

The $350,000 in new funding provided by the 1989 General Assembly will enable the Assessment Center to remain in contact with high school students after they leave the ninth grade. In the spring of 1989 the Center began to develop communications specifically for eleventh graders. What is planned for the next two years is to maintain limited contact with this year's ninth graders when they move into tenth grade; to develop an extensive program consisting of newsletters, surveys, and a different "Postsecondary Planner" for those students when they reach grade eleven; and to conduct a pilot project involving the Center's original group of 5,000 ninth graders from 1986-87, who in 1989-90 will be high school seniors.

b. 1991-93

In October, 1988, the Commission for Higher Education extended Indiana University's contract for Assessment Center services through the 1989-91 biennium. At the same time, the Commission adopted a calendar for inviting new bids to provide Assessment Center services. In keeping with that action, a Request for Proposals
will be issued on July 1, 1990, for managing the Centerin the 1991-93 biennium. Bidders will have ninety days to respond. The Commission will announce the results of that competition on or before January 1, 1991. The new contractor will have six months in which to prepare to assume responsibility for the Assessment Center and its program of services on July 1, 1991.